



NEEDU

NATIONAL EDUCATION EVALUATION & DEVELOPMENT UNIT

NEEDU National Report 2012

The State of Literacy Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Phase

2 May 2013

What is NEEDU

An independent body reporting to MBE

Function: To identify factors that:

inhibit school quality or advance school improvement

Evaluate:

the school system: national DBE, PDEs, Districts, schools

Make proposals:

for improving school quality

Publish reports:

on the state of the system

EVALUATION FOCUS IN 2012

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase

How districts, provinces and the DBE direct, monitor and support curriculum delivery

Primary schools in areas of high inward migration

15 vertical 'slices' of the system

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	SCHOOLS
Free State	Thabo Mafutsanyana	10
Gauteng	Johannesburg Central	8
	Johannesburg West	7
Northern Cape	Frances Baard	18
Western Cape	West Coast	8
	Metro North	8
North West	Bojanala	8
	Tlokwe (Dr Kenneth Kaunda)	8
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	8
	Gert Sibande	8
Limpopo	Vhembe district	8
	Waterberg district	8
KZN	Ilembe	8
	Umlazi	8
Eastern Cape	Mount Frere	10
9	15	133

Diagnostic

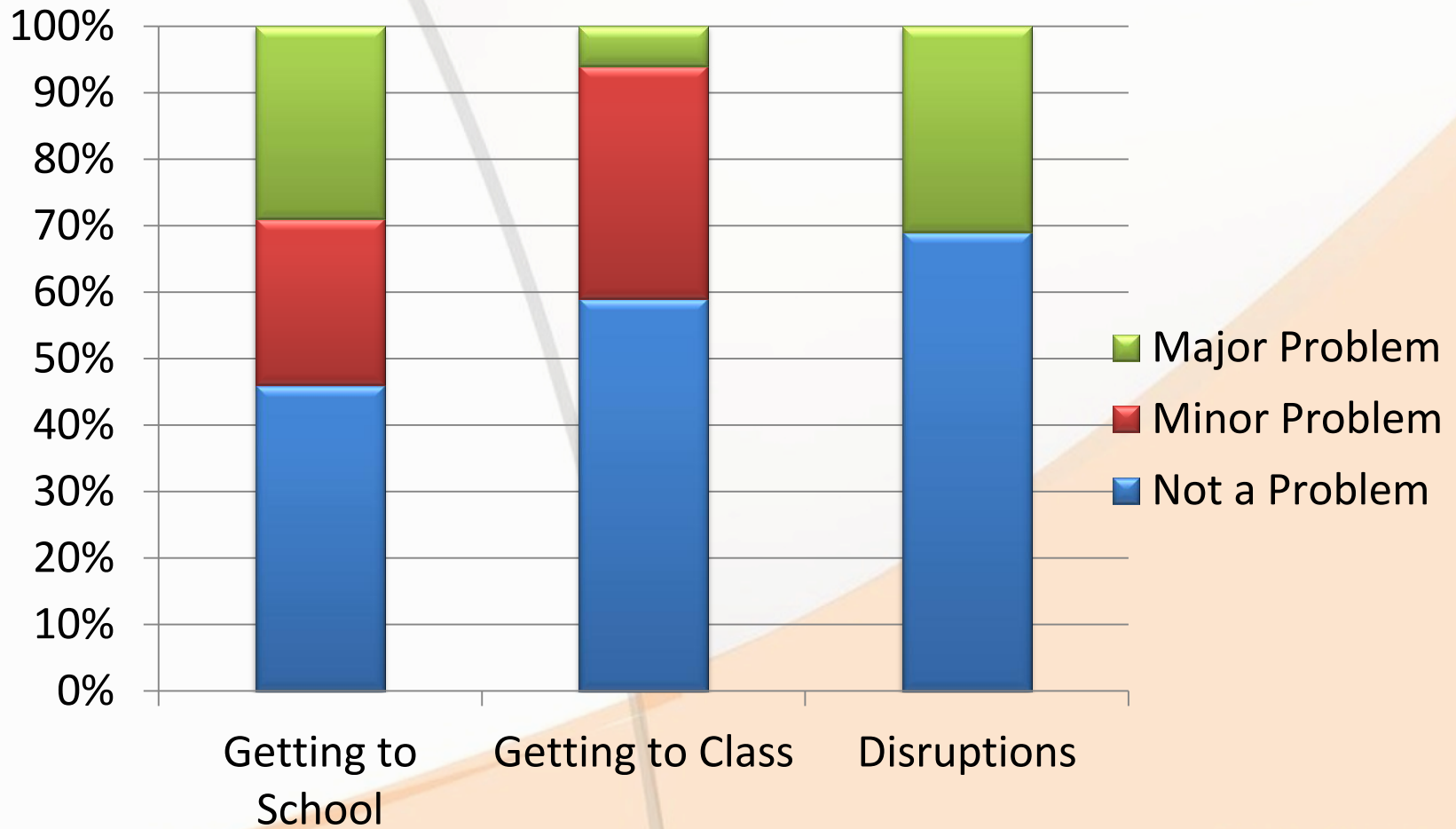
Why are schools not doing what we expect of them?

Is it because they *won't* (*indiscipline*)

or

because they *can't* (*lack knowledge*)?

The case for *won't*



TIME MANAGEMENT

- Too much time is lost in around one-third of schools evaluated
- The main problem is learner late coming
- But time is also wasted through
 - Departmental meetings and workshops
 - Union meetings
 - Memorial services
 - Sports meetings and choir practices
- And a great deal is lost through sick leave abuse

Achieving institutional functionality

Recommendation

- **Principals** must be held accountable for time use in the school
- **Circuit Managers** must work with principals in schools in which time is not optimally used for teaching and learning
- CMs and Ps equipped with training in **basic HR procedures**
- **Each province** needs a strong HR school strategy, and a provincial level capacity to deal with problematic cases.

Recommendation

- The DBE should conduct an investigation into the **regulations regarding sick leave** so as to prevent abuse of the system.

The Case for Can't: School X

- In this rural school the principal has instituted programmes to cater for a variety of learning and physical disabilities.
- It would be uncharitable to conclude that such an outstanding leader could fail to provide the very best for all her charges through ill-discipline, laziness or dishonesty. Surely, if the children at X are not reading and writing at the expected standard, it must be due to some other cause?
- It happens that reading is relatively well done at School X: Six of her best learners in Grade 2 were reading far more fluently than most of the 615 tested across the country in 2012. However, on a simple comprehension test, the results were less impressive. The ANA scores were also just on the provincial average.
- In the 2 reading lessons observed, there was an emphasis on reading as decoding symbols rather than on reading for understanding.
- The school has a reasonably well stocked library, but it had not been open to children since the librarian left earlier in the year. The most interesting acquisition was an extensive set of Ladybird readers, none of which had been opened previously, as shown by cracking spines when evaluators did so.

The case for *can't*

Results of SACMEQ teacher tests

Processes of language comprehension				TOTAL
Retrieve	Infer	Interpret	Evaluate	
75.06	55.21	36.61	39.73	62.99

Mathematics topics					Total
Arithmetic operations	Fractions, ratio and proportion	Algebraic logic	Rate of change	Space & shape	
67.15	49.68	46.51	42.30	56.44	52.39

Subject knowledge

The **subject knowledge** base of most Grade 6 teachers is **inadequate to provide learners with a principled understanding** of the foundation disciplines.

There is no reason to believe that **Foundation Phase** teachers are any better endowed.

And **HODs, Ps and SAs** are no better off

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The DBE should commission a study to investigate models for effective teacher capacitation
- SMTs should structure and lead systematic learning opportunities for teachers
- The task of provincial and district officials is to develop the capacity among school leaders to maintain an effective system of in-school professional development

Language

Three complicating factors:

- The problem of multiple home languages in many classes
- The dialectization of African languages
- The problem of terminology in mathematics

Language: Policy Options

Three main strategies, each of which has complications:

- **Leave the situation as it is.** Schools are increasingly opting for English as LOLT in the FP, even in rural areas
- **Insist on HL as LOLT** → Need to standardise the African languages
- **Make English the LOLT** in the FP

Language: Recommendations

- Affirm the current policy
- Commission the writing of graded sets of **reading materials for the nine official African languages**. Language standardisation will have to be done
- Programmes for improving the **proficiency of teachers and learners in their chosen LOLT and FAL**. Provinces investigate such programmes.

Norms for reading fluency

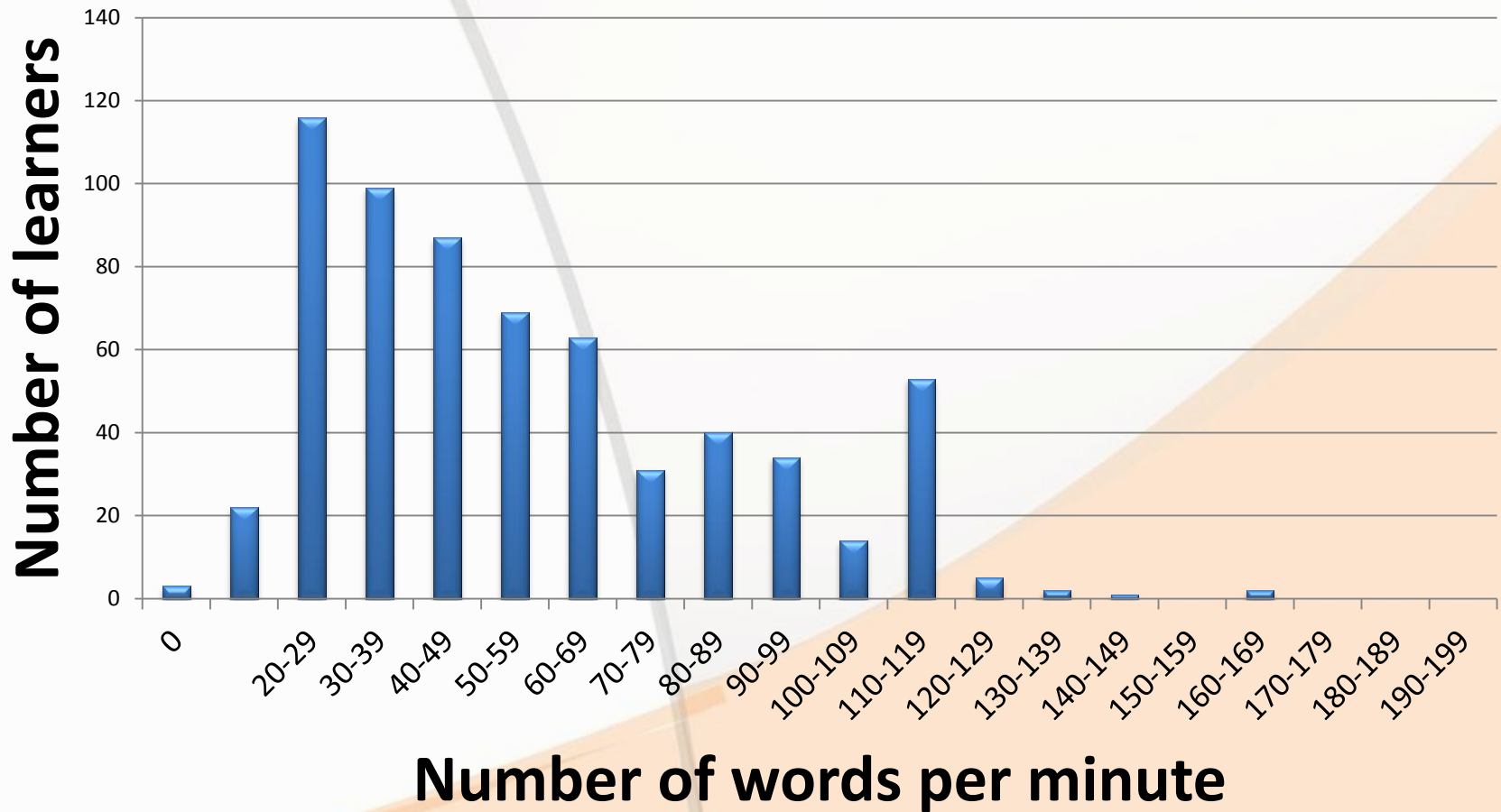
Grade	Level of learner	Reading a story: words per minute	
		End of Term 2	End of Term 4
1	Top	N/A	100
	Middle	N/A	50
	Bottom	N/A	15
2	Top	125	140
	Middle	70	90
	Bottom	20	30
3	Top	145	160
	Middle	95	100
	Bottom	35	50

READING FLUENCY

NEEDU tested the reading fluency of the top 3 readers in each of two Grade 2 classes and found:

- 72% of the three *best learners* in each class observed are reading *below the average* benchmark
- 22% are on or below the *poor* benchmark

Reading fluency (wpm)



BOOKS

- The large majority of classes had insufficient reading books: 5 titles or fewer
- Children should read at least one book a week: classes should have 30-40 titles available
- Virtually no schools use mathematics textbooks in the FP

Reading: Recommendations

- National norms should be set for reading proficiency, led by the DBE.
- Members of the SMT should monitor learner reading systematically.
- Schools must be equipped with vastly increased quantities of reading material in the FP
- An effective book retrieval system must be established in each school to manage these resources cost-effectively
- Procurement of a textbook and/or workbook for mathematics for each grade in the FP is strongly recommended

Recommendation: DBE Workbooks

- DBE workbooks were present in almost every school visited, but use is not optimal
- The programme should be continued
- The books should be assessed against the curriculum and amended where necessary
- Teacher guides should be developed
- Learners to work systematically through the workbooks during the course of the year

WRITING

- Children should frequently describe experiences, express their feelings, and analyse events in writing
- These are the activities which develop the higher cognitive functions of inference, analysis and interpretation
- Therefore, at least once a week learners should write exercise of paragraph length or longer

Avela

Umma Wam.



Mamma Wam uyatya ukutya

Mamma Wam uyalala.

Mamma Wam Sela amanzi

Mamma Wam sika imela

Mamma Wam ubona imela

Mamma Wam uyatya ipers

✓ 5*

Craig

My beste maat.

My beste maat se naam is Veronique. Sy hou van Pasta. Sy lyk mooi. Ons speel elke middag drie keer oor die kop. Sy is 6 jaar oud. Haar hare is swart. Sy is woelag. Sy bly lag. Sy hou van pers Kleer. Sy woon in die ramkam. Sy wil een dag 'n juffrou wees.

3

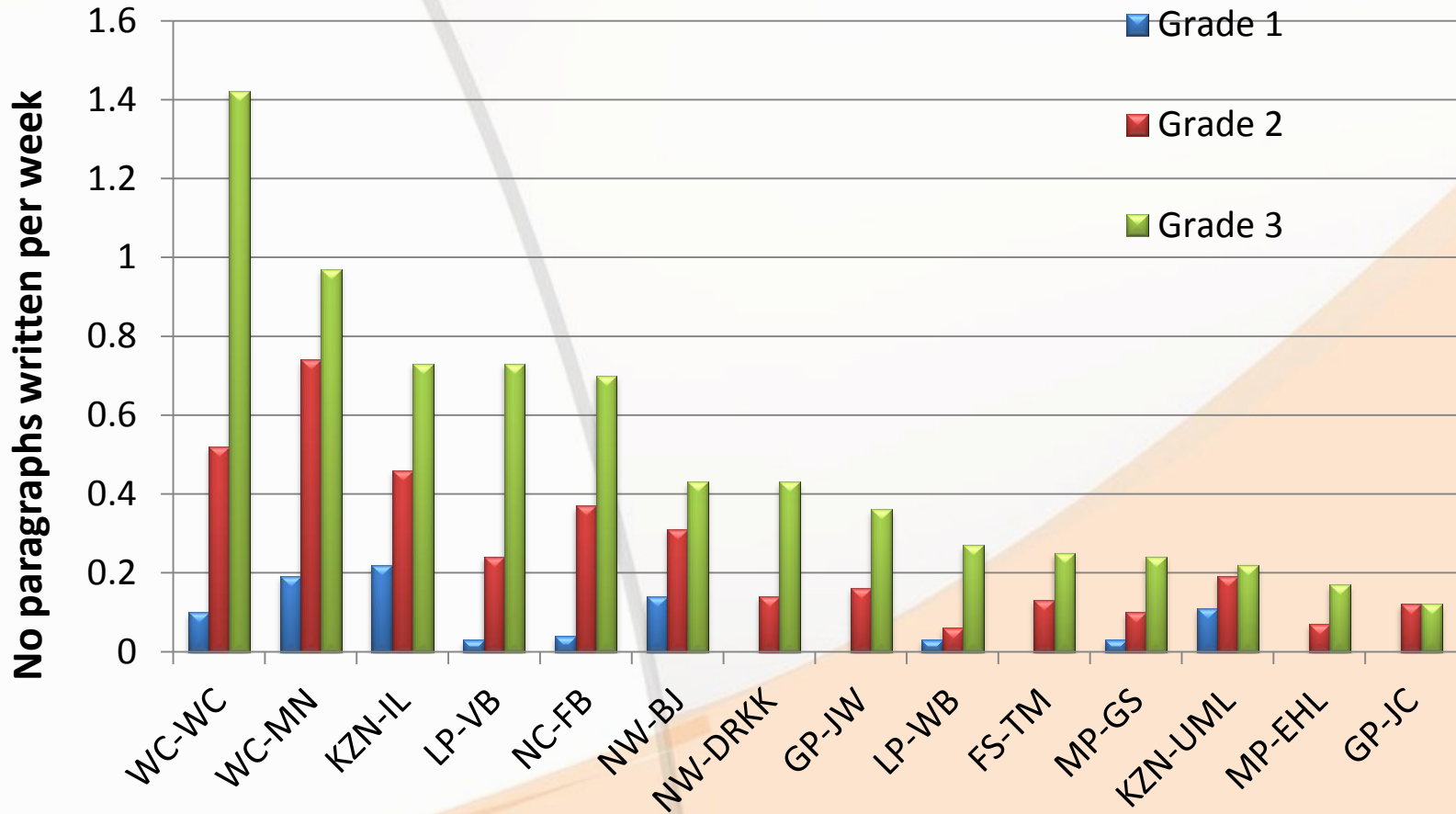


Kelsey Graad 1A

Writing: NEEDU findings

- In 10 of the 15 districts visited, learners in Grade 3 hardly ever undertook writing that extends beyond isolated sentences
- The figures were even lower in Grade 2 and in Grade 1 such writing is negligible

Writing quality - LOLT



Writing norms - Language

Grade	By the end of Term 2		By the end of Term 4	
	CAPS Requirements	Suggested number	CAPS Requirements	Suggested number
GRADE 1	Writing sentences	At least 5 exercises of sentence writing	Paragraph - three sentences	At least one exercise per week throughout the second semester
GRADE 2	Paragraph – 4 to 6 sentences	At least once per week	Story – 1 to 2 paragraphs	At least one exercise per week for the last semester
GRADE 3	Story – 2 paragraphs	At least one per week	Story – 2 paragraphs	At least one exercise per week for the last semester

Writing: Recommendations

- National norms for writing should be set, in terms of the quantity and quality of independent writing to be undertaken in learners' exercise books
- School leaders should monitor learner writing throughout the school, according to norms

Professionalising the civil service

School HODs and District SAs

Recommendation

- The DBE, in conjunction with experts from the tertiary sector, should establish the competencies required to exercise the functions of HOD and South Africa (including sound subject knowledge and proven teaching expertise)
- In future, all new HODs must be appointed using these guidelines. This will establish the baseline competency for higher promotion posts, to principal then CM or SA at district level
- Similarly, all promotions to SA should be preceded by a competency assessment

Circuit managers and principals

- The DBE should revisit the norms it uses to appoint principals
- The requirements must include having been a successful HOD or deputy principal
- In future appoint all principals according to these criteria
- The same applies to circuit managers, whose first requirement must be that they were excellent principals

Thank you